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reached the age when it is considered proper for a man to marry. In recent times at least one young man has refused to undergo the privations connected with the initiation ceremonies. This was of course a case of gross rebellion against the customs of the tribe, but there was no way of punishing him or of compelling him to conform, save by showing him that he was an object of contempt and ridicule to others. Probably such a refusal to conform to tribal customs could not have taken place before the British occupation of the islands.

Another class of wrong actions consists in the breaking of ritual prohibitions. There are, for example, as will be shown in a later chapter, a number of actions which it is believed may cause bad weather, such as burning bees'-wax or killing a cicada. There is, however, no punishment that can be meted out to any one who does any of these things. The punishment, if we may call it so, is a purely supernatural one, and it strikes not only the offender but every one else as well. In the legends of the Andamanese there are one or two stories related of how one of the ancestors, being angry, deliberately performed one of the forbidden actions and thus brought a storm that destroyed many human beings[1]. There are other ritual prohibitions the non-observance of which is supposed to bring its own punishment on the offender, who, it is believed, will be ill.

The medicine-men (*oko-jumu*) are credited with the power to work evil magic, and by its means to make other people ill, and even to kill them. A man suspected of evil magic might be liable to the vengeance of those who thought that they had been injured by him, but though the practice was regarded as reprehensible it does not seem that the society ever acted as a whole to punish a man suspected of it.

Children are reproved for improper behaviour, but they are never punished. During their years of infancy they are much spoilt, not only by their parents but by every one. During the period of adolescence every boy and girl has to undergo a somewhat severe discipline, to be described in a later chapter.

[1] See below, Chap. IV.

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In the North Andaman there is some sort of association between the unborn souls of babies, the green pigeon and the *Ficus laccifera* tree. The same name, *Reŋko*, is used to denote both the green pigeon and also the *Ficus laccifera*, of the fruit of which the pigeon is very fond. The belief of the natives is sometimes stated by saying that the souls of unborn children live in the *Ficus* trees, and that if a baby dies before it has been weaned its soul goes back to the tree. Another statement of the natives is that it is when the green pigeon is calling that the soul of a baby goes into its mother. The *Ficus* is to a certain extent tabu. I was told that the tree must not be cut or damaged. Nevertheless the natives do cut the tree in order to obtain the bark of the aerial roots from which they prepare a fibre that they use for making personal ornaments. There is no tabu in connection with the green pigeon, which may be killed and eaten.

In most primitive societies, if not in all, there are ritual or ceremonial observances in connection with the change by which a boy or girl becomes a man or woman. The ceremonies that are performed to mark this change are commonly spoken of in ethnological literature as "initiation ceremonies." The term is not perhaps the best that could be chosen, but usage has rendered it familiar.

The life of an Andaman Islander is divided into three well-marked periods, corresponding roughly with the physiological periods of childhood, adolescence, and maturity. The first period lasts from birth till about the advent of puberty; the second lasts from puberty till after marriage; the third extends from marriage to death.

During the period of childhood the boy or girl lives with his or her parents, or, in the later years of the period, with adopted parents, having a place in the family hut and a share in the family meal. A girl continues to live with her parents or with her adopted parents until she marries. When boys have finished growing, and have reached the condition of young men, they cease to live with their parents or adopted parents and, until they are married, they occupy a bachelors' hut of their own, and have their own meal.

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fastened beneath her belt before and behind. Other leaves of the same kind are placed for her to sit upon. The strips of *Pandanus* leaf and the bundle of leaves are visible in the photograph reproduced in Plate XVI.

Thus covered with leaves the girl must sit in the hut allotted to her, with her legs doubled up beneath her and her arms folded. A piece of wood or bamboo is placed at her back for her to lean against, as she may not lie down. If she is cramped she may stretch one of her legs or one of her arms, but not both arms or both legs at the same time. To feed herself she may release one of her hands, but she must not take up the food with her fingers; a skewer of *čainyo* wood[1] is given her with which to feed herself. She may not speak nor sleep for 24 hours. Her wants are attended to by her parents and their friends, who sit near her to keep her from falling asleep.

The girl sits thus for three days. Early every morning she leaves the hut to bathe for an hour in the sea. At the end of the three days she resumes her life in the village. For a month following she must bathe in the sea every morning at dawn.

During the ceremony and for a short time afterwards the girl is not addressed or spoken of by name, but is referred to as *Alebe* or *Toto*. The meaning of the first word is not known. *Toto* is the name of the species of *Pandanus* from which women's belts are made and the leaves of which are used in the ceremony. On the occasion of this ceremony the girl is given a new name, her "flower-name," and from this time till after the birth of her first child she is never addressed or spoken of by the name which she had as a child, but only by the name given to her at this ceremony. The name given is that of a plant or tree which is in flower at the time. If the ceremony takes place when the *jili* is in flower she is called *ǰili*; if when the *jeru* is in flower she is named *ǰeru*, and so on. These names will be mentioned again later in the present chapter.

[1] This is the plant (not identified) of which the leaves were, till recent times, worn by the women of the North Andaman to cover the pudenda. In the South Andaman the leaves of the *Mimusops littoralis* are in use for this purpose, and the Northern tribes have recently given up their own custom and adopted that of the South.

[On first menstruation – Analyst]

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881 784 After this ceremony the girl is said to be *aka-ndu-kolọt*. For some time afterwards she must not have her head shaved, and she must not use red paint or white clay.

841 784 I was not able to learn much about the native ideas in connection with the menstrual function. According to the account given me by one informant I gathered that the girl's first menstrual discharge is supposed to be due to sexual intercourse. The man's breath goes into her nose and this produces the discharge. It is believed that if a man were to touch a girl during this period, either during the ceremony or for some time after it, his arm would swell up.

At every recurrence of the menstrual period a woman is required to abstain from eating certain foods. According to an *Akar-Bale* informant these are, in that tribe, pork, turtle, *Paradoxurus*, honey and yams. An *Aka-Čari* informant added to the above list dugong, monitor lizard, and the fish *komar*. If she ate any of these things at such a time she would be ill. This continues throughout her life till the climacteric. A menstruating woman is not required to leave the camp, as she is in many savage communities.

From the moment of the ceremony just described the girl enters a new condition which is denoted in the *Aka-Jeru* language by the word *aka-op* (*aka-yaba* in *Aka-Bea*). This word means that the person to whom it is applied is under certain ritual restrictions, chiefly concerned with foods that may not be eaten.

881 304 In the case of a boy there is no physiological event so clearly marked as there is in that of a girl. It rests with the relatives and friends to decide when the boy is to become *aka-op*. It would seem that in the Southern tribes there is no ceremony on this occasion. Among the Northern tribes the boy is made *aka-op* by means of a ceremony that consists of making the scars on his back that are customary in these tribes[1].

When the friends and relatives of a boy decide that he is old enough to have the incisions made in his back a dance is held in the evening, and the boy is required to dance through the

[1] Unfortunately I was not able to see this ceremony performed, and my information is therefore derived from the statements of the natives.

[See pp. 92-94, cat. 116 —Analyst]

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765 terms which are used for this purpose, being terms of address that can be substituted for the names that are avoided. Thus in the *Aka-J̌eru* language one such term is *Bolok*, meaning "orphan," used in addressing or speaking of a person who has lately lost a parent. Another term of the same language is *Ropuč*, applicable to one who has lost a brother or sister. After the period of mourning is over the use of the personal name of the mourner is resumed.

765 784 During the period of mourning the near relatives of the deceased are required by custom to abstain from dancing and from using red paint or white clay. The white clay here referred to is that called *tọl* or *tọl-odu* in *Aka-J̌eru* and *tala-og* in *Aka-Bea*, and is used for decorating the body on ceremonial occasions, such as that of a big dance. Further, the mourners must abstain from eating certain foods. The customs with regard to the foods to be avoided are different in different parts. There is however the universal rule that coast-dwellers must not eat turtle, and jungle-dwellers must avoid pork. Other foods that are included amongst those to be avoided are dugong, certain fishes such as that called *komar* in *Aka-J̌eru*, and in some parts yams and honey.

765 The exact duration of the period of mourning is difficult to discover. It seems to vary considerably in different cases. In all cases it must last long enough for the flesh to decay from the bones. The proceedings at the end of mourning consist of (1) digging up the bones of the dead man or woman and (2) a dance in which all the mourners join. The bones are generally dug up by the men who performed the burial. They cover themselves with clay (*odu*) and proceed to the grave or tree and dig up or take down the bones and weep over them. These are then washed in the sea or a creek and are taken back to camp. Here they are received by the women who weep over them in their turn. The skull and jawbone are decorated with red paint and white clay, and each separately has a band of ornamental netting attached to it so that it may be worn around the neck. Additional ornament is frequently added in the form of strings of *Dentalium* or other shells. The skulls and jawbones of deceased relatives are preserved for a long time, and are worn

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either by itself, or prefixed to the name of the person spoken to, as *Maia Buio*, *Mimi Kaba*, etc. A native generally hesitates to tell his own name, and if asked the question "What is your name?" often asks a bystander to give the required information. There is, however, no hesitation about mentioning the name of any other person, except under certain special conditions.

There are certain occasions when the name of a man or woman is temporarily avoided. After the death of a relative and during the period of mourning, a mourner's name is not mentioned, either in speaking to him or of him. There are a few terms that may be used instead. One who has lost a parent is addressed as *Bolok*, one who has lost a brother or sister as *Ropuč*. For a short time before and after the birth of a child the names of the father and mother are not mentioned. A bride and bridegroom are not addressed or spoken of by name for a short period after their marriage, though if their names be A and B there seems to be no harm in referring to A as "the husband of B," or to B as "the wife of A." During the initiation ceremonies through which every boy and girl must pass, the name of the initiate is avoided. Thus on the occasion of the turtle-eating ceremony or the pig-eating ceremony, during the few days the ceremony lasts and for a few weeks afterwards, the youth or girl is never addressed or spoken of by name, but is referred to as *Kimil*. During the ceremony that takes place on the occasion of the advent of puberty, and for some weeks after, a girl is not spoken of or to either by her birth-name or her flower-name, but is called *Toto*. When a boy, in the Northern tribes, has the scars made on his back, which show him to be no longer a child, his name is avoided for a few weeks and he is called *Ejido*.

The name of a dead man or woman is not mentioned during the period of mourning, which lasts for some months after the death.

In the preceding portions of the chapter reference has been made several times to the ornamentation of the body with clay and pigment. In the Great Andaman three different substances are used for painting the body. These are (1) a common clay of which different specimens are gray, yellow or pink, called *odu*

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535 628 301 to take part in the attack on their enemies, i.e., all the able-bodied adult males, decorated themselves with red paint and white clay, and put on ornaments of *Pandanus* leaf or netting and shells. Each man held in his hands or placed in his belt or head-dress plumes of shredded *Tetranthera* wood (called *čelmo* in *Aka-Jeru*, *uj* in *Aka-Bea*). These plumes of shredded wood are now often worn or carried in an ordinary dance, but I believe that in former times they were the distinctive sign of a war-dance. To make them, a short length of the wood is taken (generally a piece of an old broken pig-arrow) and the wood is carefully shredded with a *Cyrena* shell, care being taken not to break any of the longitudinal fibres. One end is then tied with a piece of string or fibre. Similar plumes are made from *Pandanus* wood, and are carried or worn in a similar manner.

When the attacking party set out from their village each man wears a plume of shredded *Tetranthera* wood thrust into the back of his belt. They rub their bows with the shredded wood, [789] and say that this has the effect of making their own bows shoot well and those of their enemies shoot badly.

682 •784 If a man kills another in a fight between two villages, or in a private quarrel, he leaves his village and goes to live by himself in the jungle, where he must stay for some weeks, or even months. His wife, and one or two of his friends may live with him or visit him and attend to his wants. For some weeks the homicide must observe a rigorous tabu. He must not handle a bow or arrow. He must not feed himself or touch any food with his hands, but must be fed by his wife or a friend. He must keep his neck and upper lip covered with red paint, and must wear plumes of shredded *Tetranthera* wood (*čelmo*) in his belt before and behind, and in his necklace at the back of his neck. If he breaks any of these rules it is supposed that the spirit of the man he has killed will cause him to be ill. At the end of a few weeks the homicide undergoes a sort of purifica- [783] tion ceremony. His hands are first rubbed with white clay (*tol-odu*) and then with red paint. After this he may wash his hands and may then feed himself with his hands and may handle bows and arrows. He retains the plumes of shredded wood for a year or so.

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show any fear, my informants said, the spirits would kill him, but if he were brave they would take him to their village, detaining him for a time, and then releasing him to return to his friends. A man to whom such an adventure has happened will be endowed for the rest of his life with power to perform magic. He will pay occasional visits to his friends the spirits. The natives told me of one such man who died not many years ago. At irregular intervals he used to wander off into the jungle by himself and remain absent for a few hours, sometimes for a day or two. He returned to the village after such an absence looking strange and wearing ornaments of shredded palm-leaf (*koro*) which he claimed had been placed upon him by the spirits.

Save for persons who have made friends with them, and have thereby become endowed with magical powers, all contact with the spirits of the jungle and the sea, or with the spirit of a dead man, is dangerous. The spirits are believed to be the cause of all sickness and of all deaths resulting from sickness. As a man wanders in the jungle or by the sea, the spirits come invisibly and strike him, whereupon he falls ill, and may die. A man or woman is more likely to be attacked by the spirits if he or she is alone, and it is therefore always better to be in company when away from the village. The spirits rarely venture into the village itself, though they may prowl round it, particularly at night. They are more dangerous at night than during the day.

There are many objects that are believed to have the power of keeping spirits at a distance, and thus of preserving human beings from the danger of sickness. Amongst the most important of these are fire, arrows, human bones, bees'-wax, and red paint. A man or a woman leaving a hut to go only a few yards at night will always carry a fire-brand as a protection against spirits that may be prowling in the neighbourhood. If the night be dark a torch is carried in addition to the fire-stick.

The Andamanese will never whistle at night, as they believe that the noise of whistling would attract spirits. On the other hand they believe that singing will keep the spirits away.

The spirits that haunt the woods and waters of a man's own home are regarded as being less dangerous to him than those of

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776 821 is a legend that on one occasion the moon thus turned himself into a pig and came down to earth to eat the *čuei* fruit. A man named *Maia Čoinyop* met the moon (in the form of a pig) in the forest, and shot him with an arrow. *Čirikli* (the moon) took out his knife and killed the unfortunate *Čoinyop*, cutting off his head, which he left behind, and taking the body up to the sky where he ate it.

In the *A-Pučikwar* tribe the most common statement is that the moon (*Puki*) is male and that the sun (*Puto*) is his wife. A different statement from the same tribe is that the moon is female and is the wife of a being named *Tomo*. *Tomo* seems to be to some extent identified with the sun. Thus one informant said that it is *Tomo* who sends the fine weather, and that it is he who sends the daylight every day. Where *Tomo* lives, in the sky, it is always day and is always fine. When the natives die their spirits go up to the sky and live with *Tomo*. We shall see in the next chapter that, according to some of the legends, *Tomo* is the first ancestor of the Andamanese.

Yet another version is that the moon was made by *Tomo* out of opalescent stone, and it is *Tomo* who, in some way, regulates its passage across the sky.

784 776 821 A belief about the moon which is found in all the tribes, both of the North and the South, is that he will be very angry if there is any fire, or any bright light, visible when he rises in the evening shortly after sundown. At such times the natives are careful to cover up their fires so that they only smoulder without flame. Mr Man refers to this custom. "From fear of displeasing *Maia Ogar* (Mr Moon), during the first few evenings of the third quarter, when he rises after sundown, they preserve silence, cease from any work on which they may be engaged—even halting should they be travelling—and almost extinguishing any light or fire that may be burning. This is owing to the belief that he is jealous of attention being distracted to other objects than himself at such a time, or of any other light being employed than that which he had been graciously pleased to afford so abundantly. By the time the moon has ascended a few degrees, however, they restore their fires and resume their former occupations, as they consider that they have sufficiently

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complied with *Maia Ogar's* wishes and requirements. The glowing aspect of the full moon on its first appearance above the horizon is supposed to indicate that *Maia Ogar* is enraged at finding some persons neglecting to observe these conciliatory measures; there is also an idea that, if he be greatly annoyed, he will punish them by withdrawing or diminishing the light of his countenance[1]."

As regards the waxing and waning of the moon, Mr Man says that these are explained by the *Aka-Bea* "by saying that they are occasioned by 'his' applying a coating of cloud to his person by degrees, after the manner of their own use of *koiob* (red paint) and *tala-og* (white clay) and then gradually wiping it off[2]." In the *Aka-Kede* tribe the natives say that as *Maia Cirike* (Sir Moon) goes across the sky, his tongue hangs out of his mouth, sometimes more, sometimes less, and that it is the tongue that is visible, that gives the light. I did not hear any explanation of the waxing and waning of the moon in the tribes of the North Andaman. In these tribes the new moon is called *Dula e-tire*, i.e. the "baby moon," the word *e-tire* denoting the young offspring of an animal or a human being.

With regard to a lunar eclipse Mr Man writes that "in case *Maia Ogar* should be so ill-advised as permanently to withhold his light or render himself in other ways still more disagreeable, whenever the moon is eclipsed some persons at once seize their bows and twang them as rapidly as possible, thereby producing a rattling sound as if discharging a large number of arrows, while others commence at once sharpening their *rata* (arrows). Of course this hostile demonstration is never lost upon the moon, who does not venture to hurt those who show themselves ready to give him so uncomfortable a reception. Their immunity from harm on these occasions has given rise to some joking at the expense of the luminary in question, for, during the continuance of the eclipse, they shout in inviting tones to the hidden orb as follows:—*Ogar, laden balak ban lebe y'idoati! doati! doati!* (O Moon, I will give you the seed of the *balak!* show yourself! appear! appear!) This is said derisively, for, although these

[1] Man, *op. cit.* p. 152. [2] *Ibid.* p. 160.

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776 821 during the season connected with *Biliku* are made by *Biliku* and are due to her anger. When a big storm comes the natives say "*Biliku* is angry." Lightning is explained as being a fire-brand thrown by *Biliku* across the sky when she is angry, and thunder is said to be her voice growling. Another explanation of lightning is that it is a pearl-shell, called *be* in the North Andaman, thrown by *Biliku*, the bright flash of the mother-of-pearl being seen as it crosses the sky. Still another statement from the North Andaman is that *Biliku* makes the lightning by striking a pearl-shell (*be*) against a stone.

Although *Biliku* is generally mentioned when a native is asked about lightning, yet *Tarai* also wields the lightning and the thunder. On one occasion when I was talking to a native I referred to the thunder and lightning that were at the moment coming up from the south-west, making a remark to the effect that *Biliku* was getting angry about something, and was corrected by him with "No, that is *Tarai*."

776 821 784 There are a certain number of actions that are believed by the natives to arouse the anger of *Biliku* (*Puluga*), and thereby cause storms. There are three of these that are of importance.

(1) Burning or melting bees'-wax.

(2) Killing a cicada, or making a noise, particularly a noise of cutting or banging wood, during the time that the cicada is "singing" in the morning and evening.

(3) The use of certain articles of food, of which the chief are the seeds of the *Entada scandens*, the pith of the *Caryota sobolifera*, two species of *Dioscorea* (yam), and certain edible roots, of which may be mentioned those called in *Aka-Jeru labo*, *mikulu*, *ji* and *loito*.

In this matter there is an entire unanimity of belief in all the tribes of the Great Andaman. All the natives agree in saying that any of these three actions causes the anger of *Biliku* or *Puluga* and so brings bad weather.

The natives do, as a matter of fact, melt all the bees'-wax they obtain, in order to purify it, and render it suitable for use in the various ways in which they employ it. Also they do make use of all the plants mentioned under (3) whenever they are in season. They give various explanations of this variance

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between their precepts and their actions. Some of my informants said that though these actions may bring rain and storms, yet they would rather submit to the bad weather than go without some of their most prized vegetable foods. Others again say that there is always a chance that *Biliku* may not notice that the plants have been disturbed, particularly if no fragments are left lying about the camp, and if, when taking the roots, the creepers are not disturbed. Another statement is that it is really only during the season of storms, called the *Kimil* season in *Aka-Jeru*, that it is dangerous to eat these foods, that is, during the months of October and November. After this season has passed there is no longer any danger of violent storms and the foods in question may be freely eaten. Nevertheless the natives do eat these foods in the months of October and November.

Mr Man records the native beliefs about bees'-wax and the plants in question. "There is an idea current that if during the first half of the rainy season they eat the *Caryota sobolifera*, or pluck or eat the seeds of the *Entada pursætha*, or gather yams or other edible roots, another deluge would be the consequence, for *Puluga* is supposed to require these for his own consumption at that period of the year; the restriction, however does not extend to the fallen seeds of the *Entada pursætha*, which may be collected and eaten at any time with impunity. Another of the offences visited by *Puluga* with storms is the burning of bee's wax, the smell of which is said to be peculiarly obnoxious to him. Owing to this belief it is a common practice secretly to burn wax when a person against whom they bear ill-will is engaged in fishing, hunting, or the like, the object being to spoil his sport and cause him as much discomfort as possible; hence arises the saying amongst them, when suddenly overtaken by a storm, that some one must be burning wax[1]."

It must be noted that it is not only the "burning," but also the melting of bees'-wax that angers *Puluga*. As regards the plants mentioned by Mr Man none of these is available for food during the early part of the rainy season. At that time the yams are not formed, the pith of the *Caryota* palm is not ripe

[1] Man, *op. cit.* pp. 153, 154.

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and is uneatable, and the only available seeds of the *Entada* would be those of the last season that had not fallen from the pods or that had lain on the ground without having germinated. Thus the prohibition as stated by Mr Man amounts to nothing. The subject will be discussed in a later chapter. It may be remarked, however, that it is a fact easily to be observed that the natives do regard the gathering of these vegetable foods during the later portion of the rainy season and during the first part of the cool season (i.e. from October to December), as being an action that may offend *Biliku*. I was myself able to observe this on several occasions, as when once, at the very end of the rainy season, I, not then knowing the belief, asked a native to cut for me one of the pods of the *Entada* as a botanical specimen, whereupon the native, after fulfilling my request, explained to me that there would probably be a storm next day as the result of our action.

In all the tribes of the Great Andaman I found a belief that *Biliku* or *Puluga* will be angry if anybody makes a noise, particularly a noise of chopping, breaking or banging wood, during the time the cicada is singing. The cicada "sings" as the natives call it, during the short interval between dawn and sunrise, and during that between sunset and darkness. It is at these times that no noise may be made. The Andamanese do observe this custom, and refrain from making any noise at such times. For instance, if a man were singing, he would cease until the cicada were silent again. In all the tribes I found that this prohibition was connected in the minds of the natives with *Puluga*, the reason of the custom being always explained to me by saying that any breach of it would infallibly bring bad weather. In the North Andaman the cicada (*mite*) is commonly spoken of as the "child" of *Biliku*, *Biliku ot-tire*.

Mr Man refers to this custom. In one place he says that the first parents of the Andamanese were told by *Puluga* "that, though they were to work in the wet months, they must not do so after sundown, because by doing so they would worry the *butu*, which are under *Puluga's* special protection. Any noise, such as working (*kopke*) with an adze, would cause the *butu's* head to ache, and that would be a serious matter. During the

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cold and dry seasons work may be carried on day and night, as the *butu* is then seldom seen, and cannot be disturbed[1]."

The *butu* here mentioned is the cicada. The prohibition is not, however, as Mr Man says, against working, but against making a noise. Nor does the prohibition against noise extend to the whole night, but only to the short interval between sunset and darkness, for it is during this interval that the cicada is singing. As soon as the cicada is silent you may make as much noise as you please.

Another reference by Mr Man to the same custom is as follows: "Between dawn and sunrise they will do no work, save what is noiseless, lest the sun should be offended and cause an eclipse, storm, or other misfortune to overtake them. If, therefore, they have occasion to start on a journey or hunting expedition at so early an hour, they proceed as quietly as possible, and refrain from the practice, observed at other times of the day, of testing the strength of their bow-strings, as the snapping noise caused thereby is one of those to which the sun objects[2]."

This is really the same prohibition as that already mentioned, against making a noise when the cicada is singing. The interesting point, which will be discussed in a later chapter, is that Mr Man's informant associated the prohibition not with *Puluga*, but with the sun. All the natives with whom I talked on the matter said that they would make no noise at such a time for fear of offending the cicada, and therefore *Puluga* or *Biliku*, and so bringing a storm.

As regards the prohibition against killing the cicada, this seems to refer only to the imago. So far as I was able to observe, the natives do carefully avoid killing the cicada in its full-grown form. On the other hand the grub of the cicada is regularly killed and eaten, being regarded as a delicacy. It is only eaten during the months of October and November.

In connection with the cicada, and with the weather, there is a rite which was described to me, but which I did not see performed. According to the account given of this rite, which is called "killing the cicada," its purpose is to produce fine weather. It takes place in December, at the end of the season

[1] Man, *op. cit.* p. 165. [2] *Ibid.* p. 133.

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776 821 796 during which they eat the grub. When the time agreed upon for the performance of the ceremony arrives, all the members of the community are careful to be in the camp before sunset. As soon as the sun sets and the cicadæ begin their shrill cry, all the men, women and children present begin to make as much noise as they possibly can, by banging on the sounding-board, striking the ground with bamboos, beating pieces of wood together, or hammering on the sides of canoes, while at the same time shouting. They continue the noise, which entirely drowns that of the cicada, until after darkness has fallen. The rite may be performed, I believe, two or more times, on successive evenings. My informant explained the rite by saying that the natives have been eating the cicada, and the rite is intended to "kill" those that are left. After the rite the cicada disappears and is not seen or heard for some weeks, and there follow four months of fine weather with little rain.

776 821 •784 The beliefs relating to bees'-wax, to the various edible roots, and to the cicada, are the same in all the Great Andaman tribes, and are by far the most important of those connected with *Biliku*. In the North Andaman *Biliku* is supposed to be angry if any one kills a *biliku* (spider) a *reo* (a species of insect making a noise like a cicada, during the daytime, which I often heard, but never saw), or a *ćatlo* (a species of beetle). There is also a bird, which I was not able to identify, called *tərɛi*, which belongs to *Biliku* and may not be killed.

In the *A-Pučikwar* tribe it is said that two species of fish, called *uuakoro* and *liwat* belong to *Bilik* and may not be killed. A mollusc, called *towa*, also belongs to *Bilik*, and is for that reason never eaten. A bird called *Bilik-ŋ'ar-dala* (probably the same bird that is called *tərɛi* in the North Andaman) may not be killed.

In the *Akar-Bale* tribe I was told that two kinds of wood, *bukura* and *worago*, must not be used for firewood, for fear of offending *Puluga*, to whom they belong. *Bukura* is a species of *Diospyros* (ebony).

776 821 789 The only punishment that *Biliku* ever inflicts on human beings when she is angry with them for any reason, is to send violent storms. The way to stop a storm seems to be to frighten

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Biliku. One means of doing this is to throw the leaves of the *Mimusops littoralis* in the fire. These leaves explode with the heating of the juices and make a crackling or popping noise, which it is said that *Biliku* dislikes. I believe, however, that if any one were thus to burn *Mimusops* leaves during fine weather, it would be regarded as likely to cause a storm. The most efficacious means of stopping a storm is to do some of the things that *Biliku* most dislikes. To burn bees'-wax, or to go into the jungle and damage or destroy the creepers that belong to her, these are the heroic remedies against *Biliku's* anger.

The question of the Andamanese beliefs about storms is complicated by the fact that although all storms are said to be made by *Puluga* or *Biliku*, yet there is an alternative and contradictory belief that storms are made by the spirits of the sea (*Jurua*). It is said that if a piece of the *Anadendron paniculatum* creeper were to be burnt there would be a great cyclone, but this appears to be associated, not with *Biliku*, but with the spirits of the sea. It will be shown later that there is a special connection between the *Jurua* and this plant. The belief that a storm will arise if turtle fat be allowed to burn in the fire seems also to be connected with the *Jurua* and not with *Biliku*. The same is probably the case with a belief that rain will come if a *Ficus laccifera* tree be damaged.

Some of the methods used to stop storms are also probably connected with the spirits and not with *Biliku*. One such method is to go into the sea and swish arrows about in the water. One *oko-jumu* (medicine-man) of the North Andaman is reputed to have stopped a big cyclone by taking a few pieces of *Anadendron paniculatum* and crushing them, and then diving into the sea and placing the crushed creeper under a stone. An *oko-jumu* who died while I was in the islands is supposed to have been able to stop a storm by similarly placing leaves and twigs of the *Ficus laccifera* (*reyko*) under a rock in the sea.

To complete the account of this part of the Andamanese beliefs it is necessary to quote what Mr Man writes about the tribes of the South Andaman. Mr Man describes *Puluga* as a "Supreme Being" and says that some of the beliefs of the Andamanese relating to him "approximate closely to the true

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unless it be during the rains, when he descends to earth to provide himself with certain kinds of food; how often this happens they do not know since, nowadays, he is invisible[1]."

Mr Man's comparison between the Andamanese belief in *Puluga* and the Christian belief in a God, will be discussed in a later chapter when we come to deal with the interpretation of the Andamanese beliefs. It is to be noted that Mr Man does not make any reference to *Deria* (*Tarai*), nor does he mention the association of *Puluga* with the north-east.

As regards the personal appearance of *Puluga*, the statements of different informants are not in agreement. One *A-Pučikwar* man described *Bilik* as being very big, about the height of one of the posts of my hut (which was eighteen feet), white-skinned like a European, having a long beard, and carrying a bow of the *Jarawa* type.

The legends connecting *Puluga* with the creation of the world will be given in the next chapter.

I am not able to confirm Mr Man's statement that *Puluga* is omniscient, and in fact there are some customs of the natives that are in contradiction with any such belief. When they dig up yams (which belong to *Puluga*) they take the tuber and replace the "crown" with the attached stem in the ground, and explain this by saying that if they do so *Puluga* will not notice that the yam has been taken. Whenever they do any of the things that displease *Puluga*, they seem to believe that there is a possibility that *Puluga* may not discover what has been done. It may be noted that there is no means of distinguishing in Andamanese between "all" and "a great deal." Thus a statement the *Puluga* knows "everything" may be equally well translated "*Puluga* knows a great deal." Between these two statements there is no difference for the Andamanese, but there is a great difference for us, and for this reason the use of the word "omniscient" is misleading.

Mr Man says that *Puluga* "is angered by the commission of certain sins." In this connection it is necessary to refer to another passage in Mr Man's work. "That they are not entirely devoid of moral consciousness may, I think, in some

[1] Man, *op. cit.* p. 137.

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776 measure, be demonstrated by the fact of their possessing a word, *yub-da*, signifying sin or wrong-doing, which is used in connection with falsehood, theft, grave assault, murder, adultery, and—burning wax (!), which deeds are believed to anger *Puluga-la*, the Creator[1]." Although I made very careful and repeated enquiries, I was unable to meet with a single native who believed that such actions as the murder of one man by another, or adultery, aroused the anger of *Puluga*. The only actions at which *Puluga* is angry are those purely ritual offences, such as burning or melting wax, killing a cicada, digging up yams, etc., which have already been mentioned.

The Andamanese beliefs connected with the life after death will be described later in the present chapter.

As regards the "stone house" in which *Puluga* is said to live, this really means, I believe, a cave. In the North Andaman *Biliku* is frequently spoken of as living in a cave (*era-poy*). Also, it may be recalled, the sky is generally regarded as consisting of stone or rock, and it is in the sky the *Puluga* lives.

The son of *Puluga*, mentioned by Mr Man, *Pijĕor*, is a being about whom I was able to learn very little. In the North Andaman the same being is named *Perjido*, and is said to be the son of *Biliku*. The *Morowin*, whom Mr Man describes as the daughters of *Puluga*, are sky spirits. The most usual belief in the South Andaman is that there are both male and female *Morowin*. They are beings of somewhat the same nature as the jungle spirits and the sea spirits. An *Akar-Bale* informant told me, "The *Morua* are sky spirits. They eat only pork and nothing else. They are angry if pork is roasted, and make the people ill. They used to live in the big *baja* (*Sterculia*) trees, but now they live in the sky."

776 784 In this connection it may be mentioned that there is a belief throughout the Andamans that it is dangerous to roast pork. In the North Andaman the natives commonly say that the spirits of the jungle are angry if pork be roasted, and may be attracted to the spot and cause the natives to be ill. An *Akar-Bale* belief, connecting the danger with the spirits of the sky has just been mentioned. Mr Man's version of the matter is as follows :—

[1] Man, *op. cit.* p. 112.

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"...there is a company of evil spirits who are called *čol*, and who are much dreaded. They are believed to be descendants of *Maia Čol* who lived in antediluvian times. They generally punish those who offend them by baking or roasting pig's flesh, the smell of which is particularly obnoxious to them, as it is also to *Puluga*, who therefore, often assists them in discovering the delinquent; the same risk does not attend *boiling* pork, which the olfactory nerves of the fastidious *čol* are not keen enough to detect. While the Andamanese say that they are liable to be struck by *Erem-čauga-la* or *Juruwin* at any time or in any place, the *čol* strike those only who offend them, and that during the day while they are stationary, this being necessitated by the distance from the earth of their abode, whence they hurl their darts; an invisible spear is the weapon they always use, and this is thrown with unerring aim at the head of their victims, and is invariably fatal. As these demons are considered especially dangerous on the hottest days, they are apparently held accountable for the deaths from sunstroke which happen from time to time[1]."

It may be remarked that *Čol* is the name of a species of bird (probably the racket-tailed drongo), which is named from its call—*čol, čol, čol*. I did not hear the name used to denote what Mr Man calls demons, except in so far as the birds themselves are supposed to have supernatural powers. There is, perhaps, some sort of connection between the *čol* (the birds, that is) and the sky-spirits, *Morowin* or *Morua*, but I was not able to satisfy myself on the point. The connection of them both with *Puluga* is still more obscure.

Another belief in connection with pigs is that any person who cuts up a pig badly is liable to be punished. Mr Man states, on this subject, "*Puluga* never himself puts any one to death, but he objects so strongly to seeing a pig badly quartered and carved that he invariably points out those who offend him in this respect to a class of malevolent spirits called *Čol*, one of whom forthwith despatches the unfortunate individual[2]."

I was not able to find any evidence that *Puluga* is believed to be angry if a pig is badly quartered. From the natives with

[1] Man, *op. cit.* p. 159. [2] *Ibid.* p. 158.

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whom I talked on the subject I received two different statements. One was to the effect that if a pig is badly cut up the meat will be bad and anyone who eats it will be ill. The other was that if a pig is badly cut up the spirits of the jungle will be angry and will punish the offender. In neither case was there any reference to *Puluga* or *Biliku*.

In general it may be said that the natives believe that the only punishment that *Puluga* or *Biliku* ever sends against those who offend him or her in any way is bad weather, and I did not myself meet with any exception to this rule.

One other observation by Mr Man may be mentioned. He says, "When they see a dark cloud approaching at a time when rain would prove very inconvenient, as when hunting, travelling, etc., they advise *Puluga* to divert its course by shouting '*Wara-Jobo kopke, kopke, kopke*' (*Wara-Jobo* will bite, bite, bite (you)). If in spite of this a shower falls they imagine that *Puluga* is undeterred by their warning[1]."

It is clear from the above discussion of the matter that there is not any complete agreement in the beliefs concerning *Puluga* (*Biliku*) even in any one tribe of the Andamans. There are many different statements about this being which cannot be made consistent with one another without doing violence to the evidence. At the same time, amid all the differences and inconsistencies there are a certain number of points about which there is a general agreement throughout the whole of the tribes of the Great Andaman. One of these is the connection of *Puluga* and *Daria* with the weather, with the two chief winds, and with the points of the compass from which these winds blow. The other is the belief that certain actions, such as melting bees'-wax, digging up yams, etc., are disliked by *Puluga*, and are punished by him (or her) with stormy weather. On these matters there is entire agreement amongst the natives of all the tribes, and they are to the natives themselves by far the most important part of the beliefs concerning *Puluga*.

We have seen that the Andamanese believe in two different kinds of what may be called, for want of a better term, super-

[1] Man, *op. cit.* p. 153.

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755 278 823 White clay (*tɵl-odu* in *Aka-Jeru*) is sometimes used medicinally, both externally and internally. The commoner clay (*odu* in *Aka-Jeru*) is plastered on sores, and has the effect of keeping off flies, if it does nothing else.

An olive-coloured earth (called *čulŋa* in *Aka-Bea*), found in certain springs, is prized as a remedy. It is mixed with water and taken internally as a general remedy for all sorts of complaints.

824 ●784 Turning now to the magical properties of vegetable substances, there are a large number of these, and some of them have not been botanically identified.

The *Anadendron paniculatum* is a plant from which the Andamanese obtain a valuable fibre, which they use for their bow-strings, and for thread with which to make their arrows and harpoons. A number of magical properties are attributed to this [753] plant. Rheumatism is supposed to be due to the "smell" of the plant getting into the system when the fibre is being prepared[1]. The "smell" of the green plant, or of the fibre until it has been thoroughly dried for some days, is believed to frighten away turtle. A man who has been preparing the fibre would not dream of joining a turtle-hunting expedition, for his presence in the canoe would be sufficient to drive away all the turtle. A turtle-hunting expedition would be a failure if a piece of the green creeper were in the canoe. A man who has been handling the plant may not cook turtle, for the meat would be "bad," i.e., uneatable. The same thing would happen if turtle meat accidentally came in contact with a piece of the plant. All this applies only to the green creeper, and not to the fibre after it has been properly prepared and dried. The fibre itself is used for binding the heads of turtle-harpoons, so it is evidently regarded as harmless.

If a piece of the *Anadendron* creeper were burnt in the fire the natives believe that it would drive all the turtle away from the neighbourhood, or, according to another statement, that there would be a great storm.

000 So far we have considered the properties of the plant only in

[1] In preparing the fibre, the skin or bark of the young shoots of the plant is torn off in strips and these are placed on the thigh and scraped with a *Cyrena* shell.

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so far we have considered the properties of the plant only in so far as they make it dangerous to handle. It has other and beneficial properties. It is said that a man swimming in waters infested with sharks would be safe from them if he had a piece of the *Anadendron* creeper with him, in his belt or necklace. The creeper is also supposed to preserve anyone who carries it from the attacks of the sea spirits (*Jurua*).

The *Hibiscus tiliaceus* is a small tree from which the natives obtain the fibre which they make into rope, used now for harpoon lines and in former times for turtle-nets. The leaves of this tree are believed to have the power of keeping away the spirits of the sea. They have no efficacy, however, against the spirits of the forest. Leaves of the *Hibiscus tiliaceus* are used in the turtle-eating ceremony described in the last chapter. For cooking turtle the only wood that may be used is the *Hibiscus*. If any other wood were used the meat would not be good. In this connection it is necessary to point out an error in the statements of Mr Man. He says that the wood of the *alaba* must never be used for cooking turtle, though it may be used for cooking pig, and that *Puluga* is angry if this commandment is not observed and sends either the sun or moon to punish the offender[1]. There is evidently an error here. The *alaba* is the *Hibiscus tiliaceus*. Mr Man identifies it with the *Melochia velutina*, but this is an error. Now the custom in connection with the *Hibiscus* (*alaba*) is not that it may not be used for cooking turtle, but that no other kind of wood must be used. It is difficult to see how Mr Man fell into the error, unless he mistook a statement regarding the *yolba* (*Anadendron paniculatum*) for a statement relating to *alaba* (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*). We have just seen that if the *Anadendron* comes in contact with turtle meat the meat will be bad, and that if it is burnt there will be a storm.

Another plant that provides fibre for thread is the *Gnetum edule*. There is a belief that the green creeper of this plant will drive away turtle, if a piece of it be taken in a canoe.

Magical properties are attributed to the *Ficus laccifera* tree. These trees are believed to be the home of the yet unborn souls of children. I was told in the North Andaman that if a tree of

[1] Man, *op. cit.* pp. 153 and 172.

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824 the species were cut there would be a storm. The bark of the
•784 aerial roots of the tree affords a fibre used in the Little Andaman for bow-strings, but only used in the Great Andaman for making personal ornaments. It is possible that some magical properties are attributed to the ornaments made from this fibre.

The *Pterocarpus dalbergioides* is one of the most striking trees of the Andamans. It has a very hard red wood, from which the natives make their sounding-boards. There is an obscure belief in the *A-Pučikwar* tribe (and possibly also in other tribes) that it is dangerous to look at the tree when it is in flower. I was twice told a story of how some people were affected by looking at the flowers, and either went mad or died. On one occasion my interpreter translated the words of my informant by saying "They saw the flowers, and went giddy, and they all went to hell (*Jereg-l'ar-mugu*)." Men must be careful when the tree is in flower, not to look at it too long. In the North Andaman I was told that string games (*jipre*) must not be played when the *Pterocarpus* tree is in flower. They may be indulged in with safety at any other time of the year. (String games, according to one statement, were invented by the *Lau*, while another account attributes the invention to the crab.)

824 The *Tetranthera lancæfolia* is a small tree from which the
751 natives obtain the wood for the shafts of their pig arrows. The leaves of this tree are believed to have the power to keep away the spirits of the forest. They are used in the pig-eating ceremony described in the last chapter. The wood is shredded and made into plumes, and these plumes are believed to have magical properties. They are worn by a man who has killed another, and are believed to protect him from the vengeance of the spirit of the dead man.

824 A common remedy for sickness of different kinds is a small
278 tree called *gugma* in *Aka-Bea*, which Mr Man identifies as being
757 *Trigonostemon longifolius*. The leaves of this tree are made into a bed for the patient to lie upon. They are also crushed and rubbed over the patient's body, or he is made to inhale the odour of the crushed leaves. The natives say that it is the "smell" of the plant that possesses medical properties. The

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827 A hiccough is supposed to be the result of inadvertently swallowing a tree lizard, whose call rather resembles the sound of a person hiccoughing.

The condition popularly called "pins and needles" or described as an arm or leg "going to sleep" is believed by the Andamanese to be due to the bite of a rat. If a man wakes up in the night with one of his limbs benumbed in this way, he believes that a rat has bitten him while he slept.

The Andamanese say that the bite of a civet-cat (*Paradoxurus*) will produce cramp. I was once told that if a man eats the flesh of the civet-cat and then goes into the water he will become "lame." This means, I think, that he will have cramp, and so will be unable to swim.

278 The flesh and particularly the fat of the flying fox (*Pteropus*) is believed to be a remedy for rheumatism. An old man who was suffering from this ailment once asked me to shoot for him some of these bats, which he cooked and ate.

●784 If turtle-fat be permitted to burn in the fire there will be a storm.

751 Mention has already been made of the magical value attri-
755 buted to human bones. They are esteemed as a means of driving away spirits, and therefore of curing or preventing sickness. A human jaw-bone was hanging in my hut in such a position that it could swing in the wind. The natives attributed to this the illness from which I and several of them were suffering at the time, and asked me to put the bone away in a basket, where it could not move.

Bones of animals are made into ornaments in the same way as human bones, and magical properties of a similar kind seem to be attributed to them.

755 Of other objects possessing magical properties the most
372 important is fire. Fire is believed to have the power of keeping away spirits of the sea and of the forest. A fire is always kept alight beside a sick man or woman. For dysentery stones are heated in a fire and the patient is required to defecate on to these.

000 In conclusion, mention must be made of one favourite remedy

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unless it is approached with circumspection, and this belief, translated into action, gives rise to the rite of painting the body after eating. This does not mean that when the Andaman Islander eats turtle he is actually in a state of fear; he feels that he would have reason to be afraid if it were not that the society has provided him with a means of avoiding the dangers of turtle eating. What he does feel, then, as I have tried to show, is not a fear of food but a sense of the value of food.

This interpretation will, I hope, be amply justified later, and the psychological processes assumed by it will be further illustrated. One point needs to be emphasised here, namely that the suggested interpretation affords, as no other would seem to do, an explanation of the fact that some foods are believed to be more dangerous than others, and that while it is obligatory to paint the body after eating the more dangerous foods, it is not necessary to do so after eating those that are less dangerous. If the rite is simply the expression of the social value of foods, it will follow that different food substances, having different social values, must be subject to differences in ritual treatment.

There are a few other customs connected with food, recorded in an earlier chapter, which show that in general food is regarded as something that may only be approached with ritual precautions. A turtle must be killed with its head towards the open sea, and must be cut up in one particular way, otherwise the meat would be "bad." A pig must also be cut up in a particular way, and must be stuffed with certain leaves before it is roasted. A man will not eat certain foods when he is away from his own country, as he is afraid that to do so might make him ill. (This corresponds to the belief that there is less chance of illness in one's own country than away from it, and that the spirits of a strange place are more dangerous than those that haunt the jungles and the waters of a man's own home.) All these customs, I believe, are so many different expressions of the social value of food.

I have maintained earlier in the chapter that the sense of the social value of such things as fire and the materials used for weapons translates itself into the belief that these things afford protection against danger. This would seem, at first sight, to be

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contradicted by the explanation that I have just given of the belief in the danger of food. The apparent contradiction must be faced and resolved before we can proceed further.

First, it can be shown that the various things that are regarded as affording protection when used according to custom, are also believed to be dangerous, just in the same way that food is dangerous. One example of this will suffice. The fibre of the *Anadendron paniculatum*, which is used for bow-strings and other purposes, has been shown to possess a power which gives it efficacy against dangers of the sea such as sharks. This same power, however, may have injurious effects if the plant is handled without proper precautions. Thus, if a piece of the green creeper, or a person who has recently been handling it, should be in a canoe, it would be impossible to capture turtle from that canoe, as they would be driven away by the "smell" of the plant. If a piece of the creeper were burnt in the fire there would be a great storm, according to one statement, or all the turtle would be driven away from the vicinity, according to another. The handling of the plant in the preparation of the fibre, by scraping it on the thigh, is believed to be the cause of rheumatism. Turtle meat that might by accident come in contact with the plant would be dangerous and would therefore not be eaten. These different beliefs show us that while this plant possesses powers that make it of service to the society, both directly as a material for weapons, and indirectly as a magical protection against evil, it is also dangerous, i.e. it will produce undesirable effects unless treated with the proper ritual precautions.

Now just as materials such as the *Anadendron* are dangerous but may yet be used protectively, so it can be shown that the things used for food are also capable of affording protection against evil. It may be recalled that an important element of the treatment of sickness is by the use of special foods. Yams, honey, the fat of turtle and dugong and other foods are believed to possess curative properties. The flesh of the flying-fox is used as a remedy for rheumatism. But the clearest evidence is provided by the custom of wearing ornaments made of the bones of animals that have been eaten. These ornaments are believed to possess protective powers of the same kind as those attributed to

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human bones, but they are considered to be more particularly of value to the hunter when he is in the forest or on the sea. They are made chiefly from the bones of those animals that are believed to be most dangerous to eat. These animals are difficult and often dangerous to capture or kill. When obtained they become very important sources of well-being to the society. The Andamanese express their sense of the social value of these animals in the belief that it is necessary to adopt certain measures of ritual precaution in dealing with them. When these due precautions are taken, however, then the society is able to make use of the flesh to serve its own ends. So, when an animal has been eaten, and has thus been made to serve as a source of advantage, of strength, the bones, which are the permanent remains of the feast, acquire a symbolic value as evidence of past social well-being, and omens of future security. They are a visible proof of the ability of the society to protect itself and its members from the dangers that are believed to threaten the human being in the most important activity of his life, the obtaining and eating of food.

Formerly the Andamanese preserved the skulls of all large animals such as pigs, turtle and dugong. At the present day they no longer preserve the skulls of pigs, giving as their reason that owing to the dogs obtained from Europeans they now have little difficulty in killing pigs; but they still preserve the skulls of dugongs, and a fair proportion of the skulls of turtle. The *Jarawa* still seem to preserve with great care the skulls of all the pigs they kill, going to the pains of enclosing each one in a case of basket-work. These skulls, we must conclude, are more than mere trophies of the chase. As visible proofs of the ability of the society in the past to overcome the hostile powers of nature, they form, as it were, the guarantee of a similar ability in the future, and I believe that their preservation is regarded as a means of ensuring success in hunting as well as protection for the hunters. The turtle skulls that are often suspended under the forward platform of a canoe, are, I believe, intended both to protect the occupants of the canoe from the dangers of the sea and to help them to obtain a good catch.

The Andamanese belief in the power of the bones of animals

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to protect them from danger and to bring them luck, is therefore very similar to their belief in the protective power of the materials used for weapons and implements. The consideration of the apparent contradiction mentioned above has led us to a more exact statement of the real beliefs in these matters. They believe, we may say, that all the things from the jungle and the sea of which they make use as food or as materials, are dangerous unless approached with proper ritual precautions, but when so approached they become sources of strength and well-being and also of protection from unseen dangers.

To return to the main argument, which was concerned with the meaning of the patterns of clay painted on the body after eating the more dangerous foods, it would seem that this action is really a rite or ceremony, of the same general character as other ceremonial customs of the Andamans. It is an action required by custom, the performance of which on appropriate occasions serves to keep alive in the mind of the individual a certain system of sentiments necessary for the regulation of conduct in conformity to the needs of the society. By it the individual is made to feel (or to act as though he felt) that his life is one of continually repeated dangers from which he can only be preserved by conforming to the customs of the society as they have been handed down by tradition. He is made to feel that the eating of food is not merely the satisfaction of an animal appetite, but an act of communion, that the food itself is something "sacred" (if we may use that word in the sense of the original Latin "sacer"). It serves also, like any other rite in which all join, to make the individual feel the solidarity and unity of the community; all share in the common repast and the common danger, and each man sees on his neighbour the clay with which he himself is daubed.

Of course it is probable that the Andamanese custom of painting the body after eating, like our own grace before and after meat, with which it is parallel, tends to become a formality accompanied by little real feeling, but it can be shown, I believe, that such customs do possess a real value—a real psychological function—in keeping alive ideas and sentiments that will on occasion play an important part in influencing conduct.

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in the statements of the natives as to whether he becomes a spirit at once, immediately after the death, or whether he does so only after the flesh of the body has decayed. Both statements are sometimes made, but it seems common to think of the dead person during the period of mourning not as a spirit (*Lau*) but as a dead man (*empilo*). We may best express the ideas of the natives by saying that the process by which a man becomes a spirit is one that takes some months to complete, and is only ended when the bones are dug up. An interesting insight into their notions in this matter is afforded by a belief, about which unfortunately I have very scanty information, to the effect that when a man dies he is initiated into the world of the dead by a ceremony resembling the ceremonies by which a youth is initiated into manhood. In the statement of an *Aka-Kede* informant the ceremony was spoken of by the term *kimil*, which is generally used for the initiation ceremonies, and was described as a *pɔrɔto-kimil*, i.e., a ceremony in which the dead man ate *pɔrɔto* (*Caryota sobolifera*) in just the same way that a youth eats turtle (*čokbi*) at the *čokbi-kimil*. There is independent evidence that there is a special connection between the spirits of the dead and the *Caryota* palm[1].

The description of this ceremony (of initiation into the world of the dead) that was given to me stated that in it the shredded fibre named *kɔrɔ* was used in just the same way as the leaves of the *Hibiscus* are used in the turtle-eating ceremony. Further, as in the peace-making ceremony men stand against a suspended cane from which depend bunches of this same *kɔrɔ*, so in the initiation into the spirit world the initiate has to stand against the rainbow while the dancing spirits shake it and him. It is this shaking of the rainbow (according to my informant) that causes earthquakes. It may be recalled that the rainbow is regarded as a sort of bridge between this world and the spirit world, and that its name is "the spirit's cane," so that it would seem that it is regarded as like a cane with *kɔrɔ* fibre suspended from it, such as is used in the peace-making ceremony.

The explanation of the use of this *kɔrɔ* fibre was postponed earlier in the chapter, and may well be undertaken here. It serves

[1] Page 171.

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as a sign that the spot where it is placed is tabu, or, in more precise terms, that the spot must be avoided because of the presence there of a force or power that makes things dangerous. This force is present at the grave of a dead man, and therefore the fibre is placed at the grave to mark the fact, while a bunch is similarly suspended at the entrance to a village that is deserted after a death. In the peace-making ceremony the members of the one party stand against a suspended cane to which are attached strips of the fibre. The meaning of this, I think, is that it thus forbids the members of the other party from attacking them. If a man were to leave the screen of *kgro*, he would, I believe, be liable to be killed by the enemy party; it is only as long as he stands against it with his arms outstretched that he is safe, because while there he is tabu.

How then does this belief in the fibre as a mark of tabu come about? The fibre is worn by the women of the Little Andaman to cover their pudenda, and it was formerly worn in this way by the women of the North Andaman. We may conclude that this was an old element in the Andaman culture dating back to the remote period when the inhabitants of the Little Andaman became separated from those of the Great Andaman. Now in a very special sense the sexual organs of women are tabu, and, without discussing the matter in detail, we may suppose that the Andaman Islander regards the genitals of women as a spot in which resides the same sort of force or power that makes the spirits, or the body of a dead man, dangerous. One point may be mentioned as throwing light on this subject, and helping forward the argument, namely that the natives of the North Andaman often use the expression *Lau-buku* (meaning literally "spirit-women" or "female spirits") to denote women collectively instead of the phrase that might be expected—*u'e-buku*. It would seem that by reason of their sex and the special ideas that are associated with it, women are regarded as having a very special relation with the world of spirits. We may conclude that the *kgro* fibre, being a convenient material for the purpose, was first used as a covering for the women, and in this way came to be used as a sign of tabu in general, or else that for some unknown reason the fibre was selected as a suitable material to mark any kind of tabu, and

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so came to be used both as a covering for women and also as a sign of warning at the grave and the village that has been visited by death[1].

To return from this digression to the question of the initiation of the dead man into the world of spirits, it is clear that since such ceremonies take time to accomplish there is a period during which the dead man is in an indeterminate position; he is no longer a member of the society of the living, and has not yet become a member of the society of the dead. As long as he is thus situated his relatives and friends are still attached to him, so that he still remains as it were in partial contact with the living. During this time the society is still suffering the ill effects of the death, and the process of readjustment by means of the customs of mourning is still taking place. At the end of it the dead man becomes completely absorbed in the spirit world, and as a spirit he has no more part in or influence over the social life than any other spirit, and the mourning is brought to a close by means of a ceremony.

This ceremony has two parts. One is the recovery of the bones and their reaggregation to the society, a rite which we may regard as the final settling of the dead man in his proper place. All that is left of him, who was once a source of strength to the community, who had once—as it is here expressed—a social value, are the bones, his name, and the memory of him that his friends retain. We may suppose that the bones still have something of the value that originally attached to their owner, and indeed it is evident that they have, for after they are recovered they are affectionately treasured as relics by the relatives. By the end of the period of mourning the painful feelings aroused by the death have died down, so that the dead man is now the object only of memories that are pleasant, or, at the worst, bittersweet. The bones, then, are visible evidences of the fact that the society has recovered from the disruptive shock of the death, and this is why they are dug up as soon as the recovery is complete, or, rather in order to complete it, and are thereafter treasured.

[1] The brakes formed by the cane (*bide*) from the leaves of which the *tere* fibre is obtained seem to be regarded as lurking places of the spirits. The natives often speak of the *Bide-tec-lau* (*Calamus* leaf spirits).

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372 by land or sea, is not confined to them, but is undertaken by those of either sex who have most leisure or are least burdened.

11. Probably nothing introduced by us so impressed them with the extent of our power and resources as *matches;* that we should be able to produce fire with such ease and by such means was not unnaturally regarded as evidence of our being superhumanly gifted.

372 **Superstitions.**—1. Fire is supposed to possess the power of driving away evil spirits: when, therefore, at night they hear in 776 imagination the approach of the dreaded *.ē·rem-chàu·gala*,[1] they throw burning logs into the jungle surrounding the encampment. Again, should any of the community have occasion to leave their huts at night, no matter how short the distance, he (or she) invariably takes some fire as a protection against any demons that may be in the vicinity; a torch is also taken if it be very dark at the time.

[821] 2. Of darkness they assert that it was instituted on account of the misconduct of two of their ancestors, as will shortly be mentioned.[2]

776 3. From fear of displeasing *mai·a .ō·gar-*[3] (Mr. Moon), during 784 the first few evenings of the third quarter, when he rises after sundown, they preserve silence, cease from any work on which 821 they may be engaged—even halting should they be travelling—and almost extinguish any light or fire which they may be burning. This is owing to the belief that he is jealous of attention being distracted to other objects than himself at such a time, or of any other light being employed than that which he has been graciously pleased to afford so abundantly. By the time the moon has ascended a few degrees, however, they restore their fires and resume their former occupations, as they consider they have then sufficiently complied with *mai·a .ō·gar-*'s wishes and requirements. The glowing aspect of the full moon on its first appearance above the horizon is supposed to indicate that *mai·a .ō·gar-* is enraged at finding some persons neglecting to observe these conciliatory measures; there is also an idea that, if he be greatly annoyed, he will punish them by withdrawing or diminishing the light of his countenance.

776 4. Regarding meteorolites they appear to possess no super- 821 stition. Shooting stars and meteors they view with apprehension, believing them to be lighted faggots hurled into the air by *.ē·rem-chàu·gala* in order to ascertain the whereabouts of any unhappy wight in his vicinity; if, therefore, they happen to be away from

[1] *Vide post* "Religious Beliefs, &c.," paragraph 12.
[2] *Vide post* "Mythology," paragraph 31.
[3] Singing, dancing, and thumping on the sounding board at that hour are, however, not displeasing to him.

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their encampment when the phenomenon occurs, they invariably secrete themselves, at the bottom of a boat, for example, if fishing, and remain silent for a short time before venturing to resume their interrupted employment.

5. Between dawn and sunrise they will do no work, save what is noiseless, lest the sun should be offended, and cause an eclipse, storm, or other misfortune to overtake them. If, therefore, they have occasion to start on a journey or hunting expedition at so early an hour, they proceed as quietly as possible, and refrain from the practice, observed at other periods of the day, of testing the strength of their bow-strings, as the snapping noise caused thereby is one of those to which the sun objects.

6. They invariably partake of a meal soon after rising, as it is believed that no luck can attend any one who starts to his day's work on an empty stomach.

7. They dare not use the wood of the tree called *al·aba-* (the bark of which supplies the fibre used in making harpoon lines and turtle nets) for cooking turtle, for, as will be found elsewhere,[1] this is an act so abhorrent to *mara ōgar-* that he visits the offenders with summary and condign punishment.

8. In tempestuous weather the leaves of the *Mimusops Indica* are constantly thrown on the fires, as the popping sounds thus produced are thought to have the effect of assuaging *Pūluga-*'s fury and causing the weather to moderate.

9. When they see a dark cloud approaching at a time when rain would prove very inconvenient, as when hunting, travelling, &c., they advise *Pūluga-* to divert its course by shouting "*wâ·ra-jō·bo kō·pke, kō·pke, kō·pke*" [*Wā·ra-jōbo*[2] will bite, bite, bite (you)]. If in spite of this a shower falls they imagine that *Pūluga-* is undeterred by their warning.

10. This practice of menacing *Pūluga-* is probably that to which Colonel Symes alluded when he wrote that "they confess the influence of a malignant Being, and, during the south-west monsoon, when tempests prevail with unusual violence, they deprecate his wrath by wild choruses."

11. Storms are regarded as indications of *Pūluga-*'s anger; winds are his breath, and are caused to be blown by his will; when it thunders *Pūluga-* is said to be growling at something which has annoyed him; and lightning, they say, is a burning log flung by him at the object of his wrath.

12. There is an idea current that if during the first half of the rainy season they eat the *Caryota sobolifera*, or pluck and eat the seeds of the *Entada pursætha*, or gather yams or other edible

[1] *Vide post* "Mythology," paragraph 32.

[2] This snake, as already mentioned under "Medicine," appears to be the *Ophiophagus elaps*.

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to them that I was able to find the various amphibia which subsequently proved to be new species. They know poisonous and non-poisonous snakes by sight and how to avoid being bitten. They could tell me which trees flowered and when, because they knew this affected the whereabouts and the quality of the honey, and they knew which flowers and roots had medicinal properties. The necessity, in accordance with their superstitions, of keeping their prey alive as long as possible has also given them a somewhat gruesome knowledge of anatomy and physiology. The call of food has also made them weather experts; they know which air currents and winds bring what animals, or cause them to vanish, and what game is likely to haunt what terrain. They could tell me where to find certain fish, or crustacea, or where certain roots or fruit in season were to be found.

The striking feature of their knowledge was that it did not merely relate to what was edible or inedible. Amphibia, reptiles and birds for example, they never eat under any circumstances; but they knew where to find them all for me, and they knew the bird migrations and how these related to the movements of the marine fauna.

Providentially, the exactitude of the Onges' botanical and zoological knowledge is matched by the magnitude of their superstitious fears. Were it not for this all the edible vegetation on the islands would have disappeared long ago as a result of their incredibly thoughtless destruction. The effect, therefore, is almost that of a purely involuntary, embryonic form of 'agriculture', contrasting strangely with their persisting, persistent and complete lack of interest in any formal care, however primitive. The Onges believe that the plants which produce edible roots and tubers belong to a spirit related to Eiuga, whose anger is aroused if he sees his plants being taken; his vengeance is quick and terrible.

There are on Little Andaman a number of creepers with edible fleshy roots, sometimes as thick as a man's wrist, sticking out horizontally at least fifty to sixty centimetres from the main stem, only just below the surface. They invariably grow in light soil, where there are no rocks, and are very easy for the Onges to reach with their digging sticks. These and the yams, sometimes as big as a football, which are to be found everywhere, the Onges have to steal from the spirit who owns them. The creepers themselves,

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twining up into the trees, and the shorter-stemmed yams, are never disturbed. The Onges merely dig down, at a respectful distance from the plant, certain of finding what they want. On no account must there be any signs of the theft for the spirit to see, so they quietly take off roots or tubers some way from the main stem and leave the rest, patting the earth down afterwards and covering the place with leaves. The guardian spirit, not, apparently, all-seeing, notices nothing, as the plant continues to flourish, improved by the root pruning. Everyone, guardian spirit and Onges alike, is happy.

This unconscious preservation may well be the result of a decree, in some remote past, by an Onge seer who realized the danger of killing off the entire plants and invented the guardian spirits as a deterrent. The Negritos still make similar use of roots and tubers; Skeet and Blagden fifty years ago referred to the Semang eating poisonous wild yams, having removed the toxic substances.[1]

It is interesting that both in the past and even today a number of peoples at a very early stage of cultural development have progressed from the gathering of the wild yams of South-East Asia to the first signs of cultivation and agriculture. It is possible that they were the first plants ever to be cultivated by primitive Man, the Negritos with their digging sticks delving then as they do now; the genus is certainly a very ancient one, and some species, such as *Dioscorea alata*, may have spread from Asia to Africa and Oceania, and even to America, with the beginning of cultivation. But this is a stage of development which the peoples of the Andaman never reached.

The digging stick, the only implement the Onges have with which to get at the roots and tubers, has in recent times been affected, though to a very limited extent by the spread of iron. Only a few individuals possess a primitive iron tool, half a metre long, cylindrical in shape and usually not more than one and a half centimetres in diameter and flattened into a form of blade at one end. The vast majority still have only the age-old stick made of hard wood, hardly recognizable as a tool and crudely fashioned into a point at one end. This tool, so primitive that it can easily be mistaken for an odd

[1] It is interesting that the American Aborigines, especially in Brazil, do the same with manioc, but I saw nothing of this nature in the Andamans.

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rule the multiplication and growth of the various animals and plants useful to Man.

The Onges do not love Eiuga, or any of the other spirits. They merely fear them, and seek to evade their anger by various expedients. It is curious that they never hesitate to try and deceive the spirits and think themselves very clever when they manage to steal roots or tubers from the ground. Nor do they revere the spirits of their ancestors; these are to be feared and propitiated by preservation of their bones. By definition none of the spirits, since they can be deceived by simple tricks, can be all-powerful, but this conclusion, simple though it is, is still beyond the Onges' powers of reasoning.

The Onges' fear of the dead is instanced by their carrying round their necks the *ibidanghe*, or necklet of human jaws, as a propitiation. The wearing of the bones prevents the spirit from going away (by analogy the bones of dead enemies are burned to force the spirit, clearly a hostile one, to leave the place). The custom of burial within the communal hut follows the same logic – the spirits of the dead are kept near their bones and hence near their relatives, to help them in the daily round of hunting, fishing and gathering food.[1]

Unlike most of the other peoples whose burial customs are even today based on their underlying principles, the Onges have not progressed beyond the stage of relating the dead directly to the demands of daily life; they have no 'practices' of any kind, no concept at all of holy places, prayers or images. Even the very names of the dead are soon forgotten. Their fears, however, are none the less very real. They do not like to speak of Eiuga or even of the lesser spirits, for fear of attracting their attention.

The Onges have no stories or explanatory legends, like those reported by Brown for Great Andaman. They have only short epics, if such they may be called, recalling extraordinary events in

[1] This belief is of very remote origin, and can be traced back at least to the megaliths of southern Asia, like the splendid ones which I was able to photograph, among others, in the mountains of Travancore. Here again the object was to prevent the dead from leaving their relatives. Similar ideas are found today in India among several tribes, notably the Munda, or Nias, and among various peoples of Indonesia, and even Oceania. The rituals are probably followed today without any understanding of their meaning or symbolism; the details vary from place to place, but the underlying principle, the original fear, remains the same everywhere.

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dead were buried securely bound in a knee-to-chest position, still the custom among the Andamanese). The Onges go no further than this and the idea of a Lord of the Spirits who rules all things, although on Great Andaman there has been some progress towards more anthropomorphic concepts. The complete absence of any form of cult, prayer, representation, or votive offering cannot, I feel, be the result of cultural decline from a more advanced age; this would have resulted in gross distortion and illogical superstition, but not in complete absence of any 'religious' practices of any kind.

18 SACRIFICE

No sacrifices of any kind are practised in the Andamans, nor is there any concept of propitiation, although there is evidence that even in the late Palaeolithic era some form of ritual sacrifice was practised, at least in Europe and probably over a much wider area. One would assume from this, and from paragraph 17 above, that the Andamanese is an even older culture.

19 TABOOS

Although my own experiences among the Onges have led me to think that taboos do not exist, some authors have asserted (in my view wrongly) their existence on Great Andaman. It is not, however, possible to draw any reliable conclusions on this point.

20 CEREMONIAL

The complete absence of any form of ritual surrounding birth, the purification of women, initiation, etc., or evidence of any such ritual in the past, is striking, in view of the prevalence in all the surrounding areas of strictly observed ceremonial for many occasions. As in the case of religion, such complete absence can only mean that the Andamanese became isolated before the idea of ritual spread to the area.

21 MEASUREMENT

The Andamanese have no means of counting, and no words to express gradations of time or size; to them everything is either 'small' or 'big'. They take no interest in the passing of years, and have no idea of their own age. To them life is but the passing of the seasons and the harvests of game and fish and fruits that they bring. This utter lack of any sense